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STATE FOR EUR/PPD FOR SALTMAN-WINANS; LDAVIS; ECA/PE/C/CU
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SUBJECT: AMERICAN CONTEMPORARY CLASSICAL COMPOSER BRINGS SHOCK
THERAPY TO TBILISI

¶1. SUMMARY: American composer George Flynn's visit to Tbilisi was the first opportunity for Georgians to meet a living American classical composer and experience contemporary classical music that is uniquely American. Flynn and his music were featured in the Tbilisi Conservatory's "Eteriani - Piano Days" from December 3-10, co-organized by the Embassy, the Conservatory, and Georgian-American concert pianist and De Paul university professor of piano, Eteri Anjaparidze. Ms. Anjaparidze, three of her Georgian masters level students from De Paul, and Flynn himself performed his piano compositions in front of a packed audience. His visit not only raised awareness and understanding of the sounds defining American contemporary classical music, but also provided an invaluable opportunity for Georgians to listen to and interact with a well-known American composer.

RESULTS

¶2. Mr. Flynn's visit to Tbilisi was a kind of 'shock therapy' for the classical music world in Georgia. Classical music - especially European baroque and romantic music - has strong roots in Tbilisi and is a defining aspect of Georgia's musical identity. Flynn's uniquely American style of contemporary classical music, while considered 'mainstream' in the contemporary classical field, represents a dramatic shift from the traditional European classical music which is the main focus of music performance and music theory curricula in Georgia.

¶3. Mr. Flynn's visit served as an example of the strong collaborations taking place in the classical music field between America and Georgia today. Presented within the context of Eteri Anjaparidze's third annual "Piano Days" at the Tbilisi Conservatory, the program highlighted not only Flynn the composer, but it also profiled three young, accomplished, Georgian piano students currently studying with Professor Anjaparidze at DePaul who performed Flynn's very difficult pieces. This performance of Flynn's piano pieces followed on the heels of a similar concert at De Paul University in honor of the composer's 70th birthday.

¶4. Mr. Flynn's presence in Tbilisi also raised awareness of contemporary American history and its cultural context. Heavily influenced by the events of Vietnam while a music student at Columbia University in the late 1960's, many of Mr. Flynn's compositions reflect the sounds and thoughts of this period. During a lecture at the Tbilisi Conservatory, Flynn discussed some of these deeper meanings with music students and painted a comprehensive picture of the 1960's environment in America that profoundly shaped his compositions.

MULTIPLIER EFFECTS

¶5. During his week in Georgia, Mr. Flynn repeatedly expressed his

desire to further develop the relationship between America and Georgia in the field of contemporary classical music. He was especially interested in developing a reciprocal program in the United States that would bring a young Georgian composer to perform Georgian contemporary classical music to American audiences. While many details of these trips have yet to be worked out, Mr. Flynn's enthusiasm suggests that great potential exists for such collaboration.

THE PROGRAM

¶6. The week-long program incorporated a variety of performances, lectures and meetings. Mr. Flynn performed and presented his compositions during the opening concert of the 'piano days' celebration. During a lecture at the Tbilisi Conservatory, Mr. Flynn provided a brief history on American contemporary classical music and discussed the influences and technical processes behind his own compositions. The composer was also in attendance at each of the six classical music master classes conducted by Professor Anjaparidze over the course of the week. The program concluded with an evening reception at the residence of the DCM that brought together music professors, students, media personalities and others from Georgia's music community.

MEDIA

¶7. During the week Mr. Flynn and Ms. Andjaparidze visited Georgia's classical music radio station, Radio MUZA, an NGO started under the auspices of Georgia's beloved First Lady, for an hour-long interview that will be translated into Georgian and stored in the stations archives. Mr. Flynn was also the featured guest on the "Late Night Talk" on Georgian Public Television with host (and Tbilisi's first Fulbright alumnus) Zurab Karumidze. Georgian Public Television covered segments of the opening concert in their evening news

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broadcast.

FUNDING

¶8. Flynn's program was co-sponsored by the Tbilisi Conservatory and Eteri Anjaparidze/DePaul University, and funded by PAS Tbilisi.

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